

Communicating risks to stakeholders

Prof. Ragnar Lofstedt
King's College London

In this presentation I will

- Briefly summarise the risk perception and communication literature;
- Summarize some of the key findings coming out of the CCS communication literature;
- Suggest some future research avenues and practical suggestions;

Risk perception and communication- work by Fischhoff, Slovic et al

- Natural vis a vis technological
- Voluntary-involuntary
- Familiar-non familiar
- Control-non control
- High probability low consequence risk vs low probability high consequence risk;
- Fair not fair
- Trust-no trust

Risk communication 2

- Based on these findings regulators and industry took the view that we should now develop risk communication programmes:
 - Site and build new nuclear power plants;
 - Build waste incinerators;
 - Convince publics that certain foods are safe;

Risk communication 3

- 3 risk communication strategies put forward:
 - Top-down risk communication
 - Dialogue risk communication
 - Bottom up risk communication

Risk communication 4

- Risk communication is still difficult to do:
 - Social amplification/attenuation;
 - Narrative
 - Deliberation
 - Optimistic bias

CCS and communication

- Has to a large degree not been based on risk perception and communication literature (aside from Bruine-de Bruine; Morgan; Siegrist);
- Have highlighted proactive communication-eg the Longannet CCS project;
- Importance of building trust-working with local stakeholders;
- Role of informing the publics and using visual messages;

What is needed going forward?

- Engaging the local community as early as possible in the siting process-no one likes surprises;
- Not ignoring the role of social amplification-eg the case of Barendrecht, NL;
- The importance of familiarity-conduct tours of proposed CCS sites, provide displays of how CO₂ is transported etc;
- Understand the role of culture-memories, scenery and certain landmarks may be destroyed if a facility is built;
- Better sharing of knowledge-CCS researchers should work with the wider risk communication community and visa-versa;
- Provide some local ownership of a facility;
- Get a new CCS facility built!

CCS advocates need to address key concern:

- Rasmus Hansson, leader of the Norwegian Greenparty: “CCS is basically about catching a problem and stuffing it away under the carpet. We will then live with the statistic of some gigantic underground burp. The problem is the same as with the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster. Things that absolutely cannot happen have a tendency of finally happening.”
(Guardian 10th April, p. 30)